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Progress on Faculty Senate Blue Sky Proposals

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April 14, 2013

TO: Professor Harlan Onsrud
President, Faculty Senate

FR: Paul W. Ferguson
President

Julie Hopwood
Senior Advisor to the President
Co-Chair, Blue Sky Plan Implementation Steering Committee

RE: Progress on Faculty Senate Blue Sky Proposals

I am pleased to offer this update regarding progress on Pathways 1-5 relative to the specific proposals submitted by the Faculty Senate. The Pathway Chairs very much appreciated your meeting with them on April 3rd to discuss progress and this report is a result of that meeting.

Blue Sky Pathway 1

Professor Mick Peterson, Faculty Senate Representative to Pathway 1, has proposed several key ideas and suggestions regarding the identification of signature strength and key emerging academic and research growth areas to be developed in the Blue Sky Project. The memo proposes substantive process and evaluative criteria for consideration in developing such a program for the University. Pathway 1 Chair Jake Ward has assigned a sub-committee to work on reviewing and defining this process chaired by Ivan Manev, Dean of Business and includes Owen Smith, Mick Peterson, Renee Kelly, and Jen O'Leary. The committee met on April 4th and is finalizing a recommendation on not only the outline of the process, including the Senate's suggestions, but also the timeline for completing the process. That recommendation will go to the Blue Sky Steering Committee with anticipated roll out in Fall 2013.

Blue Sky Pathway 2

Professor James McClymer, Faculty Senate Representative to Pathway 2, has provided suggestions related to increasing retention and numbers of graduates, and reinvestment of indirect costs.

Pathway 2 is focused on achieving financial sustainability for the University of Maine. The strategies to achieve this goal are multifaceted and have resulted in extensive discussion by the team. The team has taken into consideration the input and ideas from across the campus including those of the Faculty Senate. Specific actions include the following:

The committee has identified a list of program and financial metrics and benchmarks for the purpose of measuring success. These measures are being reviewed and refined for circulation by mid-May.

Dr. Jimmy Jung, the new Vice President for Enrollment Management was hired and the proposed University Strategic Enrollment Management Plan has been finalized. The web link is being finalized for posting. College specific enrollment management plans are in progress. Extensive work is being undertaken to review retention initiatives and financial aid strategies corresponding with some immediate changes in operational strategy. A contract with an International Recruitment firm has been finalized to assist with meeting future enrollment targets for international students. This will directly address ideas submitted by the Faculty Senate.

Expanded student middle and high school outreach efforts are currently being identified and undertaken with others to be included in the enrollment plan. In particular, a global scholarship program targeting in-state international students graduating from Maine High Schools/Academies has been put in place resulting in an increase in applicants to UMaine.

The pilot project for the CLAS Advising Center was funded and its success and ability for replication are being evaluated in the context of the overall advising program and options with an emphasis on increasing student retention consistent with sustainability efforts.

Lengthy discussions have ensued related to all revenues and expenditure optimization. In particular, recommendations regarding private fundraising and research enhancements and incentives are being discussed and finalized for comment and review. The end result is intended to grow and strategically target gift funds, endowments, and investments in research and the academic programs. Entrepreneurial and incentive based programs are a part of the approaches being considered.

Work has begun to specifically connect the financial planning to the outcomes of the other pathways to ensure appropriate financial support and return.

A financial model has been developed to model and test the various revenue and expenditure assumptions so as to achieve a sustainable solution.

Blue Sky Pathway 3

Pathway 3 has been meeting monthly since October 2012 and will continue to do so. Presenters at each of our meetings have addressed many initiatives identified under “Marketing and Morale.” The first half of the year focused on the progress made in Marketing and Communications. Since then our focus has been on those topics that more naturally fall into the *morale* category of Pathway 3. To that end, we have had conversations about “community engagement” with Claire Sullivan, who is leading the CERTS Initiative, to determine how we might collaborate and support that work. In addition, we heard from a University-wide Committee working on the Faculty Leadership Academy Initiative. Amy Blackstone of Pathway 3 is also a member of that stakeholders group. We expect to have a white paper for review and

Representative to Pathway 3, led a discussion with the Pathway 3 committee to explore the initiatives identified in the January 23, 2013 memo from Professor Borgman to the Pathway 3 Committee:

Unit-based Incentive Programs. The suggestion from the Senate is to create a process to encourage and reward innovation that increases revenue. The Committee found this idea very promising, particularly the transparency of the suggested process and the idea of an objective decision-making group. The Committee felt that the idea might be expanded to a broader definition of innovation. There may be ideas that enhance the student experience or improve teaching, research or outreach. Long term, these ideas may increase revenue by increasing the University's enrollment or stature; however, in the short term they may not be easily quantifiable. We would like to encourage these ideas as well. Since the Provost has been given the lead in this initiative to reward innovation, the Committee arranged a meeting with the Provost, Professor Borgman and Judy Ryan. This meeting occurred as part of the last Committee meeting on March 22, 2013. It was determined that in order to make further progress a meeting should be planned for Provost Hunter, Senior Vice President Waldron and Associate Vice President Ryan to discuss budget implications, interface with Pathway 2, and develop next steps.

International Teaching and Research. The Senate also suggested that we implement a survey of international teaching and research. We believe that gathering information and assessing our international profile has value. The data could be used in marketing and communicating how truly global the University is. The data could also be used in setting a baseline in order to measure progress in increasing our international scholarship. There was a discussion about whether UM already had the information via annual reports and faculty activity reports. After checking with Ted Coladarci, Director of Institutional Research, UMaine does not capture the information as suggested by the Senate and a survey would need to be done. While the Committee supports the idea, we felt the survey, as described, might not be broad enough to provide a sense of other multicultural aspects of our University. In addition, as part of our overall discussion, Robert Dana, Vice President for Student Affairs and Co-Chair of Pathway 4, visited with the Committee to discuss the steps already underway to survey, collect and summarize all the work being done on behalf of diversity. Dr. Dana agreed to return to the Committee and share the results. It is clear that your suggestion generated much discussion and interest in this topic. We plan to further update the Senate via our faculty representative after our joint meeting with Pathway 4 on April 24 with any further ideas we may have on this topic.

Blue Sky Pathway 4

Professor Judy Kuhns-Hastings, Faculty Senate Representative to Pathway 4, has provided suggestions to the Committee related to the Flagship Internship Program, assessment of student learning, and the general education curriculum. The Pathway 4 team has been working on each of these areas of interest.

Flagship Internship Program. The Pathway 4 Team was highly appreciative and impressed with the depth and scope of the concept and detailed procedures, particularly the web-based content, submitted by the Senate for the Flagship Internship Program in the January 23, 2013 letter. This material is consistent and mutually supportive to the ongoing activities of Pathway 4. Pathway 4 identified a need to review existing efforts on campus with regard to internships, what opportunities are available and to gather information regarding students' experiences and outcomes relative to internship experiences. To that end, a subcommittee consisting of Engineering Dean Dana Humphrey, Doctoral Student Brianna Hughes, and Professor Carol Kim has dedicated efforts as outlined below:

- Met with Dr. Ali Abedi to connect the Center for Undergraduate Research (CUGR) with Pathway 4
- "Exit Survey" drafted to gather data from graduating students (through MaineStreet application for graduation) such as if and where they have had internships. The logistics of implementation are being developed in conjunction with Enrollment Management.
- Identifying an on-line clearing house to link students seeking internships with companies having internships (such as is now in place for Educate Maine's Project> Login). Efforts will also include better publicity for on-campus internship opportunities.
- Important next step is to meet with the Career Center to develop a partnership
- Discussed the possibility of polling businesses in Maine to determine what they expect/need in student workers and graduates

Recommendations emerging from this review include:

- Build on existing efforts including: CUGR, grants that incorporate internship opportunities (NSF REU, SIF Energy Project, DOE FBRI project, and others), Project >Login, and departments that have a long-standing tradition of internships. The Committee especially will want to work with Professor Onsrud who was instrumental in the Project > Login effort and incorporate his ideas for improving that type of process.
- Establish better connections with businesses, and government agencies that have internships to expand internship opportunities for our students.
- Consideration of establishing Internship Coordinators to increase both paid and unpaid internships
- A proposed program will be introduced in Fall 2013.

Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes. Dr. Jeffrey St. John, Associate Dean of Lifelong Learning and Director of CETA, and Dr. Theodore Coladarci, Director of the Office of Institutional Research are working to compile existing assessment plans and practices across campus. This is needed background material for any campus-wide, faculty-based assessment team. At the direction of Provost Hunter, Pathway 4 is supporting ongoing efforts to increase ease of delivery, rate of return, quality of feedback, and student success regarding student evaluations of teaching by assisting individual faculty in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the Maine Business School in their respective development of (1) a software program that uploads a faculty member's course evaluation instrument, prompts students to complete the instrument, and returns the electronic data set to the instructor and his or her academic unit via a paperless process, and (2) a modified version of the existing Short Form

instrument featuring optional questions reflecting elements of pedagogy, formatting, content, and technology unique to online courses.

General Education Curriculum. The Pathway 4 team has not yet initiated any discussion of a wholesale revamping of General Education. Future analysis of how responsibility for the General Education curriculum and delivery is distributed across campus is needed, particularly in view of the impending University of Maine System Credit Transfer project.

As initiatives evolve, the Faculty Senate will be included in discussions and final development of recommendations.

Blue Sky Pathway 5

Professor Doug Bousfield, Faculty Senate Representative to Pathway 5, submitted to the Committee, support for the major infrastructure improvements as well as comments and substantive suggestions to focus on improvement of the campus classrooms and internal classroom spaces.

Pathway 5 activity has centered on several initiatives this year that fully support the focus suggested by the Senate. Initiative 1 (conduct and develop a comprehensive plan), Initiative 2 (analyze and identify the total cost of ownership annually and determine a capital investment strategy), and Initiative 10 (build incrementally into the budget replacement and refresher plans for equipment, classrooms, labs and technology of the Blue Sky Project). All Pathway 5 initiatives have overarching implications for the issues and suggestions raised by the Faculty Senate regarding a comprehensive refresher plan for campus classroom spaces.

The comprehensive asset plan, developed in Initiative 1, will identify recapitalization needs that will become the baseline for the refresher plan. The guiding principles that result from Initiative 1 will inform strategic planning efforts going forward. Initiative 2 culminates in an asset investment strategy that will guide the planning and selection process for the classroom refresher plan, as well as subsequent benchmarking and impact measurements to optimize the total cost of ownership of these spaces. Initiative 10 specifically applies to this vital component of the campus asset portfolio. It will create a detailed classroom and lab renewal plan and schedule that will isolate these spaces into an asset portfolio and develop a distinct capital investment strategy designed to ensure the long-term sustainment of these mission critical assets.

We continue to appreciate and value the input of the Faculty Senate and will continue to communicate all progress related to the Blue Sky Project.

Cc: Blue Sky Plan Implementation Steering Committee